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POLAND AS A CONCRETE FACTOR IN INTERNATIONAL POLITICS

By Bronislaw D. Kulakowski, Ph.D.

Poland until lately completely forgotten, or set aside as having no reality by the majority of writers and students was suddenly discovered anew in 1914 by the Russian, Austrian and Prussian armies.

These armies representing the vital interests of all civilized nations possessing any culture whatsoever, in thus revealing the existence and vitality of Poland have brought into life yet another "question."

An old Latin proverb runs: "*quieta non movere*," which may be freely translated into: do not interfere with him who is digesting a heavy and satisfying meal. The resurrection of Poland at the funeral feast arranged for her obsequies, was most disturbing to the professional violators and annexationists of Polish territory. In her wake emerged from oblivion the long forgotten figures of Ireland, Bohemia, Lithuania, Finland, the Ukraine, and India.

European statesmen, with their strong tendency to rationalism, due perhaps to their profession, tend to treat Poland as an impossible and undesired ghost—such as troubled Banquo—and, closing their eyes to this vision, in the effort to maintain their sober, rational state of mind, they endeavor to continue in their former opinions and policies.

More and more often as the end of this conflict draws nearer and the terms of peace are being molded into visible form, the defenders of the various systems based on the principles of imperialism, and especially of the German and English imperialism, are heard striving to prove the intangible nature, the ghostlike unreality and lack of material form of the "principle of nationality," as compared no doubt, to the vital and materialistic reality of *their* imperialistic appetites.

Their method of reasoning is well-known: it suffices to extract from any economical or political fact appropriate principles and theories; then to apply the principles and theories thus derived to some given subject in order to prove their lack of rationalism and thus simultaneously prove the lack of material reality possessed by the fact itself, from which they had originally been derived.

Happily, rationalistic magic of this kind, although practised with uniform success by European diplomats and publicists, fails entirely on American ground. The derided, "American business-mind" has shown Europe that it easily understands and values accordingly the real underlying aims and appetites of such logicians "extracteurs de quintessances," whom Rabelais long ago exposed. Thanks to the participation of America in this war, oppressed nationalities will no longer be considered as ghosts with no right to existence or to consideration. The great Western Republic has extended a protecting hand to these oppressed peoples: in all his political messages and speeches President Wilson recognizes and demands the right of all nations, even the smallest and the weakest, to belong to the one great union, as members of the League of Nations. They have been recognized as concrete political factors and as such, entirely subject to the tenets of international law.

It is fruitless to expend effort in the endeavor to define accurately what should be understood by the term "nation." We do not yet possess a definition of organized matter. We know only that it lives, although the comprehensibility of life itself has not yet been sharply defined. Those social groups known as nations must be heard when they demand the right to present their views at the International Peace-Congress, if only for this reason: that legal justice has no definition of what constitutes a nation and knows only the state as a factor in international law. The realistic mind of the American bases its understanding on facts and not on abstractions, and could not overlook the nation as a political factor.

This entirely novel point of view of the nation as being an accomplished fact, an organism, possessing reality and material existence, logically leads on to the formation of an entirely different relation between statesmanship and national claims.

Relations based on the uncertain ground of a word-conflict concerning principles must be cast off.

The task of every politician in the realistic and modern affairs of today includes first, the summarization of the potential and active forces of a given nation, of its physical and moral forces as well, and the degree and character of its internal cohesion, these factors serving to decide the ability of the nation to lead an independent existence. His next task is to estimate the degree and character of the nation's economic mutual attraction, thus deciding the extent of its activities in the mutual understanding and co-operation necessary within the family of nations. Let us then attempt to examine the position of the Poles in the League of Nations, from this point of view.

THE TERRITORIES OF THE POLISH STATE

Prof. Eugeniusz Romer, of the University of Lwów in a series of works on the geography of Poland, demonstrates very aptly the influence of the physiography of the country upon the historical development of Poland. He epitomized his views in a short essay which was recently published in the *Geographical Review* (vol. iv, no. 1, July, 1917).

"The affluents of the Vistula, more numerous from the east than is the case with any of the other river systems to the west, would indeed seem to have assigned to Poland an eastward expansion on a scale impossible in the west, where the lowland belt is narrower. How different the map of Europe might now be had not the Poles been a people whose social and political institutions were directly opposed to the spirit of conquest!"

The result of this distinctive national character of the Poles combined with the effective influence of the physical condition of the Polish territory was the formation of the

first union of states—a union “the free with the free, the equal with the equal” as reads the official document of the union of Poland and Lithuania.

With unusual clearness of perception, Professor Romer points out that

The boundaries which the various partitions of Poland have introduced into the political map of Europe have been destructive and not constructive. Rivers which once pulsed with life have now become merely dead border lines. The actors in the crime perpetrated upon the Polish nation separated themselves from one another by boundary lines that followed rivers. Assuredly strife would not be long in breaking out again.

Poland from the geographical point of view belongs neither to the Russian conglomeration nor to the central European state as planned by the Germans. Poland is an organic unity, a single indivisible whole. The Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian nations will for the second time in their history build up a Union which will be again the source of strength and riches, the cradle of a temperate and humanitarian civilization, a guarantee for European peace.

In consequence foreseeing that for the purpose of defense against the Germans on one side and the Russian anarchy on the other, the Polish-Lithuanian-Ukrainian union will be resuscitated at the Peace-Congress, statistical data are given below:

The area and population of the provinces occupied by Prussia

	SQUARE KILOMETERS	POPULATION
Great Duchy of Poznan	11,190	2,064,175
Upper Silesia	13,217	1,900,000
West Prussia.	9,863	1,703,424

Provinces occupied by Austria

Galicia.....	30,321	8,160,783
Austrian Silesia	2,300	368,118

Provinces occupied by Russia

Old Kingdom of Poland	49,087	13,335,400
Total population.....		27,531,900

The following districts which during the last decade have been called Russian provinces were integral parts of the Federal Polish-Lithuanian-Ruthenian Commonwealth and the Russian population consists exclusively of officials of the occupying government whereas the inhabitants are Ruthenians, Lithuanians and Poles.

GOVERNMENT OF	SQUARE KILOMETERS	POPULATION
Grodno	14,896	2,048,200
Kowno.....	15,518	1,857,100
Minsk.....	35,220	3,035,800
Mohylew.....	18,514	2,465,600
Wilno.....	16,181	2,075,900
Witebsk.....	16,986	1,093,100
Kiew.....	19,676	4,792,500
Podolia.....	10,224	4,007,500
Wolhynia.....	27,669	4,189,000
Totals:.....	180,911	30,424,700

There is a compact mass of 18,000,000 Poles living on their own ethnographical territory and the following figures show the percentage of Poles residing on Lithuanian and Ruthenian territories; it should be borne in mind that these figures which have been taken from Russian statistics have been deliberately minimized in order to lower the proportion of Poles dwelling in these districts.

In the province of Grodno 30 per cent of the inhabitants are Poles, in Wilno 25 per cent, Minsk 10 per cent, Witebsk 7 per cent, Mohylew 5 per cent, Wolhynia 11 per cent, Podolia 9 per cent, and in the province of Kiew 4 per cent. In the province of Kowno 72 per cent of the land is in Polish hands, in Wilno this ratio is 69 per cent, in Grodno 59 per cent, in Minsk 45 per cent, in Witebsk 37 per cent, in Mohylew 31 per cent, in Wolhynia and Podolia 50 per cent and in the province of Kiew 40 per cent.

These territories have remained faithful to the ideal of freedom which blessed Poland when she was independent and they have not deserted her through the long fight for the regaining of her lost liberty. This ideal of freedom and liberty which has been for centuries the motto for the

Polish nation has found a powerful defender in the United States of America. The Polish political problem is based on these high principles and permanent ideals.

The political goal of every Pole is the reestablishment of a completely independent and free Polish State, under a single indivisible government elected by the nation on the basis of free suffrage exercised by all adult citizens without any discrimination as regards to sex, birth, religion or financial status. The territory of the Polish State ought to include all the portions of the former commonwealth of Poland, which was the first federal state in the world, formed through voluntary union based on the covenants of Lublin and Hadziacz, between the Polish, Lithuanian and Ruthenian (Ukrainian) nations. As a temporary basis the frontiers as they were in 1772 would serve, with a rectification which should take into consideration requirements of a political and legal nature, viz., that every nation should be free to decide its form of government and its political allegiance. As far as the Polish question is concerned, this rectification means in practice the addition to the Polish State on the one hand of the essentially Polish provinces of upper and lower Silesia and of Prussian Masovia (which did not actually form a part of Polish territory in 1772) and, on the other hand, the recognition of the right of the Lithuanian and Ukrainian nations to either sever their political union with the Polish nation and to form independent states, or to remain in this union based on a federal constitution amended in accordance with modern requirements. The creation of a federal state is, however, subject to the agreement of the Lithuanians and Ruthenians, and this consent having no medium of national expression has not yet been affirmed. In the expectation of this occurring, the physical and moral resources of ethnographical Poland can be now considered.

PHYSICAL RESOURCES

Coal. The fundamental wealth of modern countries is represented by their possession of coal fields, and the possession of this source of energy and power guarantees them economic independence. Wishing to weaken France as much as possible the Germans have cut off her coal supply from northern France and Belgium and are now endeavoring to prevent the import of this commodity from other sources by their submarine blockade. Should this plan of the Germans to create a coal famine succeed, the French would succumb.

The Polish nation will be able to face the future with equanimity: when it takes over its rightful lands Poland will possess coal fields sufficient to assure her in the future a great industrial development.

The Polish coal fields have an area of 6000 square kilometers; of this area 3000 sq. km. are in Silesia; in Galicia there are 1500 sq. km., while in the Kingdom of Poland there are also about 1500 sq. km. Only the smallest part of this enormous area has been exploited. Approximations as to the tonnage of coal it will be possible to mine are:

Lower Silesia.....	47,132,097,000
Galicia.....	23,580,000,000
Upper Silesia.....	16,139,200,000
Kingdom of Poland.....	<u>5,651,864,000</u>
Total amount.....	92,503,161,000

The total thickness of the coal seams is about 19 meters.

In lower Silesia there were, in 1910, 56 coal mines in operation, worked by machines of 218,000 horsepower and employing 90,009 miners.

The Prussian state became rich and powerful as a consequence of the production of coal in these Polish coal-mines, worked by Polish labor for the benefit of the German Autocracy. With the return of these rich resources to the Polish nation, the malevolent power of Prussia will be effectually crippled.

In upper Silesia there were 20,660 laborers engaged in the coal mining industry, in the kingdom of Poland, 23,516 and in Galicia 6,257.

The exploitation and development of Galician coal resources is yet in its infancy. The lack of free capital in Poland has been the cause of this, to a great extent, but the Prussian policy of robbing the Poles of their riches was the chief bar to the development of this industry.

Before the war the Germans bought up the rights of exploiting the greater part of the Galician coal fields but never started mining, in the endeavor to force Galicia to buy Prussian coal and simultaneously to retard the commercial growth of the Galician population by withholding from them this means of obtaining a livelihood and forcing them to emigrate.

The majority of the Pennsylvania miners are either former inhabitants, or the descendants of the former inhabitants, of this the richest coal mining district in Poland.

The chief autonomous governing body in Galicia profited by the diversions of the war to buy up the greater part of the coal mine concessions from their German owners. In this way the Polish authorities are now in possession of real treasures of fundamental wealth, which will insure the economic independence of the country.

Mineral-ore mines. Iron-ore is to be found in different parts of Poland but not in great abundance.

In the production of zinc, Poland comes next after the United States producing 208,000 tons annually.

The lead mines are exceedingly rich also. Petroleum is one of the most important sources of wealth. It was in Galicia that the method of distilling petroleum for lighting purposes was discovered by two Polish chemists Lukasz-kiewicz and Zeba, in Lwów in 1853, one year before the invention of Silliman.

The Galician production of petroleum stands third in the world, and before the war, was increasing more quickly than that of the United States. During the last five years, the production of Galician petroleum has increased 150 per cent while for the same period, American production only increased 30 per cent. Since the outbreak of the war the Russian armies have destroyed many wells and oil producing machinery but new wells have been opened and operated in hitherto barren districts in the vicinity of Krosno.

Sulphur occurs in Galicia and in the kingdom of Poland.

Lead and silver mines operated during the independence of Poland will prove valuable potential additions to the wealth of the future Polish State.

Salt is found in abundance. The salt mines of Wieliczka, in operation for the past 600 years are still far from exhaustion. Near the village of Bania, close to Kalusz, are found large sylvine and kainite deposits which are extensively mined for the potassium salts, indispensable to agriculture. These deposits approach a thickness of about 45 meters in the vicinity of Bania.

The mineral wealth and resources of Poland are the basis for the future chemical industries which will arise. The lack of political freedom, of centralized protection and assistance such as the United States enjoy, has been the only bar to the development of the natural wealth to be found in the Polish territories. Expelled by famine and hunger from his home and from his native land, deprived of education by his enemies, the Polish worker seeks a living elsewhere. With the return of freedom to Poland, enlightenment and prosperity will return.

The natural mineral springs of Poland, although more numerous and often more beneficial than those in other countries are not so well patronized by the rich: German self-interest has again been opposed to Polish development and improvement.

Agriculture. There was a time when ships from all parts of Europe put in at the Polish port of Gdansk (Danzig) to load up with the greatest sources of wealth which Poland possessed—wheat and rye. Poland then was an entirely agricultural country and the life of the farmer has left a deep and lasting imprint upon the Polish character. In the kingdom of Poland 75.8 per cent of Polish lands are being tilled; in Galicia, where a great part of the country is rocky and mountainous, 70.5 per cent of the land available is thus used. In Poznan 74.2 per cent of the land is under cultivation. Poland has retained her position as an agricultural state to this day, three-quarters of the population being engaged in this pursuit. Thanks to this occu-

pation the Polish race is in no danger of degenerating physically. The strength and stamina possessed by the Polish laborer is well-known to every American. The product of the Polish farms, while comparing favorably with the primitive Russian agricultural system, does not compare so well with the productivity of the farms of the western nations. Again this underdevelopment has been caused by the lack of free national and political life. In Russian Poland, schools and agricultural societies have been denied the Poles while in Prussian Poland the German policy has been one of repression, expropriation and interference. Russia attempted to ruin the Polish farmer by adopting a system of differential tariffs. The transportation of corn from the Russian province of Saratow, about a thousand miles from the Prussian frontier, cost less than the transportation of corn from Poland to the same point on the Prussian frontier, less than 100 miles away.

Russia levied a tax of 102 copecks on every dessiatine of land (about $2\frac{1}{2}$ acres) in Poland, while charging the Russian peasant from 12 to 26 copecks for the same area. The Prussians utilized the whole power of their state to buy out Polish landowners. Expending 276,000,000 marks, the German government bought up the public lands in order to colonize these lands with German settlers.

In this economic conflict with a nation which has successfully defended itself against the whole world in a three years' war, the Polish peasant has been the victor, for after twenty-five years of this unequal struggle, the amount of land owned by Poles not only has not decreased but on the contrary has increased by 80,000 hectares. The success of the Polish peasant in this conflict with the power of the Prussian state demonstrates sufficiently that the Poles are beyond all doubt absolutely fit to be allowed to govern their own destinies.

The effect of the Prussian tariff-system intended to destroy the Polish farmers was nullified, for instead of raising corn, they began to produce in other directions and in a more commercial way. Numerous distilleries were organized for the production, for export, of spirits from

potatoes. In the Kingdom of Poland alone spirits to the value of 15,000,000 roubles were produced in 1910. Beer was brewed to the value of 13,000,000 roubles in the same year. Cultivation of beets and the sugar industry in the provinces occupied by Russia has increased enormously and occupies an important position in the world's production.

Commerce and industry. Industry developed unequally in the different districts of Poland, and again, the reason for this has been due mostly to political causes. In Galicia and in the kingdom of Poland the occupying powers have endeavored, so far as lay in their power, by the medium of preferential tariffs, by hampering the construction of lines of communication, by obstructing the building of a system of artificial waterways and, always with the help of oppressive taxes and other like measures, to hinder the free development of Polish trade. But in spite of these obstacles Poland began to change slowly from an agricultural into a commercial and industrial country.

Polish lands still bear the marks of an agricultural country, but the power to supply the foreign markets is decreasing. Polish industries possess all the special characteristics of modern collective capital, with a decreasing number of companies corresponding to the simultaneous growth and possibility of production. In this respect Prussian Silesia leads the other provinces of Poland. Out of every thousand inhabitants the following numbers were engaged in agriculture, mining or other industries and trade.

NAME OF PROVINCE	AGRICULTURE	MINING AND INDUSTRIES	TRADE
Prussian (Lower) Silesia.....	310	424	102
Austrian (Upper) Silesia.	350	460	76
West Prussia.....	499	241	92
Duchy of Poznan... ..	540	234	87
Kingdom of Poland.....	566	260	84
Galicia.. ..	768	90	78

Increase in the production of articles or products of Polish industries in the kingdom of Poland is shown plainly by the following figures:

In 1877, 90,767 employees worked in 8349 concerns and turned out products to the value of 103,404,000 roubles. In 1895 this had increased to 205,827 workers engaged in 12,987 business concerns, producing goods to the value of 278,600,000 roubles. In 1910, although the number of corporations and companies had fallen to 10,953, the number of employees had risen to 400,922 and the value of their products to 860,848,000 roubles.

During this war the different armies have destroyed and burnt thousands of villages and towns in Poland. And it has been mainly the work of the Russian armies. The Germans made use of less barbarous methods, but none the less more thorough. They removed to Germany all machinery from the factories, being especially careful to destroy the Polish weaving industry which had threatened to compete with the German production: the Polish production in 1910 having a value of 341,000,000 roubles.

The enormous destruction caused by the war has greatly affected the national wealth of Poland, but the Poles do not despair. Every student of history who has studied the struggle of the Polish nation with the three greatest powers of Continental Europe, will readily admit the surprising regenerative ability of the Polish nation. From 1772 until 1815 Poland was one great battle field. The prosperity of the nation seemed to be at an end. The youth had perished on the battlefields, epidemics and famines carried off half of the population. Yet fifteen years of peace and the comparative independence of the congressional kingdom of Poland sufficed to repair the losses and to build up anew the lost prosperity of the nation. The best proof of this miraculous regeneration can be seen in the Polish-Russian war of 1830-1831. The excellent management of the Polish state during this period shows well that although defeated the Poles were burdened by no huge war debt, retaining on the contrary a considerable sum in the exchequer.

The destruction caused by the present war in Poland does not appal the Poles. The nation knows that once mistress of its own destinies these wounds also will heal.

The annexationists of the neighboring countries are aware of this fact. The Russian Ambassador M. Bachmetjew has already reminded the Poles that they will have to pay Russia for their independence by taking over a part of the Russian war debt!

THE MORAL FORCES OF THE POLISH NATION

One of the most certain indices of the potential strength of any nation is its statistical record. The decrease of the population is a certain sign of degeneracy. The slow growth or stability of the number of inhabitants demonstrates most often that the nation in question is entirely certain of outliving the most potent forces of destruction, by the simple force of its quiet strength. The intensive growth in numbers of a nation points to the fact that a desperate battle is in progress with some degree of opposition and that this nation is emerging as the victor from the struggle.

The history of Poland is a vivid example of this statement. Long centuries of power and prosperity had resulted in a comparatively slow increase in the population of the Polish commonwealth during the period of its independence. The downfall of Poland was the signal for the most thorough repression possible, and the nation suffered as no other nation ever has. The violators of her integrity had resolved to erase the very name of Poland for all time from the maps of the world. A weaker nation would have succumbed under such oppressions: the Polish nation demonstrated its unconquerable vitality. The figures showing the growth of population are instructive, arresting; the Polish nation has no intention of committing "race-suicide" and the following figures will amply prove the truth of this statement:

POPULATION	WEST GALICIA INCLUDING CRACOW	EASTERN GALICIA	LOWER SILESIA	POZNAN
<i>year</i>				
1858	1,604,159	3,028,707	189,507	1,417,155
1871	1,967,821	3,450,195	232,557	1,583,843
1880	2,113,290	3,845,617	268,491	1,703,397
1890	2,299,665	4,308,151	300,150	1,751,642
1900	2,501,768	4,814,048	369,354	1,887,275
1910	2,693,210	5,336,177	434,821	2,099,831
Increase 1858-1910	+1,089,051	+2,307,470	+245,314	+682,676
Percentage	+68%	+77%	+129%	+48%
Area (sq. km.)	23,157	55,315	2,222	28,291
Population per sq. km.	1.6	97	196	72

POPULATION	WEST PRUSSIA	UPPER SILESIA	PROVINCE OF WARMIA (WEST PRUSSIA)	KINGDOM OF POLAND
<i>year</i>				
1858	1,135,658	1,077,663	404,518	4,673,869
1871	1,314,611	1,309,563	460,992	6,193,712
1880	1,405,898	1,441,296	492,362	7,232,292
1890	1,433,681	1,577,731	516,911	8,440,698
1900	1,563,658	1,868,146	519,626	9,402,253
1910	1,703,474	2,207,981	543,469	12,467,300
Increase 1858-1910	+567,816	+1,130,318	+138,951	+7,793,431
Percentage	+50%	+105%	+34%	+167%
Area (sq. km.)	25,555	13,230	12,026	126,952
Population per sq. km.	67	167	45	98

Still more striking are the figures showing the numbers of births in excess of deaths. During the period of years 1841-1850, the birth-rate exceeded the rate of mortality, per thousand of the population, by 10 per cent in Galicia, by 11 births in Poznan, and by 8.3 births in the kingdom of Poland. For the period between 1908-1910 the ratio of increase showed 15.6 more births than deaths per thousand in Galicia, 18.11 more in Poznan, and 16.5 more in the provinces of the kingdom of Poland. In this way the Polish nation in the course of forty years has emerged victorious in the struggle with the age-old enemy of mankind—death. It should be borne in mind however, that since the downfall of the independent Polish commonwealth, enormous numbers of her best man material have been lost in the many insurrections against the occupying powers. The years 1794, 1797, 1806, 1809, 1815, 1830, 1833, 1846,

1848, 1863, and 1905 were the years of insurrection and were marked by torrents of blood shed in the attempt to free Polish territories from the violators of her independence. To these losses should be added the very considerable figures of emigration, the highest in the history of any nation: more than 4,000,000 Poles are today dwelling in foreign countries.

With these statistics in mind, one is in a position to value correctly the whole intensive warfare waged for Polish freedom, and can appreciate the surprising differences in the increase of different nationalities. The population of France increased by 11 per cent in the years 1857-1910; the population of Germany by 75 per cent; the inhabitants of the Polish territories by 105 per cent, the figures for European Russia showing the same increase.

With its right to independent existence denied, the Polish nation has still proved its ability to possess social existence among the nations by creating substitutes for state executives and fulfilling their duties. The struggle for enlightenment and education with the powers of the partitions, who endeavored to enforce ignorance, will be recognized in the future by impartial historians of national culture as one of the great achievements of the human race.

After the defeat of the valiant Kosciuszko, Russia, Prussia and Austria, to begin their campaign of total extermination, closed every school in Poland; just before the outbreak of the war there were more persons unable to read and write in the Russian occupation than there were in the sixteenth century. In order to deprive the Poles of all sources of education and enlightenment, the Russians systematically confiscated the great Polish libraries and collections and carried them away to Russia. The nation, however, adapted itself to these conditions and arranged private libraries and collections, and organized libraries on a coöperative basis.

George Bernhardt, the faithful and wise servant of Prussian Junkerism, wrote a whole work on the subject of Polish coöperations; another German, Cleinow, wrote a work of two volumes on this subject. In both of these studies,

in spite of their fundamental hatred of the Poles, the authors cannot refrain from expressing their amazement and respect for the achievements of these Polish organizations, for the untiring and ceaseless energy of the Polish nation, and above all they express their fears for the future of Germany.

If the Entente statesmen understood Polish affairs, if they could proceed further than empty phrases and speeches, they would have realized long ago, that a strong Poland is the only effectual counterweight against the might of Prussia. But in the meantime, Mr. Balfour at Washington endeavors to prove to President Wilson the difficulties of recreating the pledged Polish state into an independent, united and autonomous body. According to the New York press, this English minister called the Polish nation a "medley of nationalities," which in his opinion was the best argument he could produce against the wise and far-seeing policies of President Wilson.

But this "medley" has successfully passed the most difficult tests as to its national cohesion and organization. One example will suffice: within a few weeks after the evacuation of Warsaw by the Russian armies and authorities, a civic committee had organized a Polish system of courts of law and justice, created a new system of Polish schools, and formed a powerful force of Polish militia for the retention of order in the city. A few weeks prior to this, under the Russian occupation, all courts of law, schools and the police organization had been exclusively Russian. The Polish will to live created everything from nothing.

It has been our object to lift a corner of the covering from the magnificent efforts of the Polish nation against unheard-of opposition and obstacles. We know that this aspect of Polish life will appeal more than any other to the American people.

Poland is an unknown country. Very few are aware that Poland was the first state in Europe to possess a parliamentary form of government and that the Polish constitution allowed citizens to deny fealty to the King if he transgressed his rights or the rights of others. Few

historians are aware of the fact that Poland had already introduced the principle of habeas corpus in the fifteenth century.

Poland differed from other nations. Poland expanded not by conquest and annexation but by voluntary unions. But in order to avoid being drawn into wars, Poland had sometimes to reject offers of new unions as, for example, when the republics of Nowgorod and Pskow desired to unite with the Polish state in order to retain their rights of free-men, then threatened by the inroads of the Muscovite Tzar.

"Equals with equals and free with free-men" was first inscribed in European history when the convention of Lublin was signed. Still earlier, in 1413, the treaty of Horod expressed sentiments which today, in the year 1917, seem like the fantastic vision of a dream yet far from fulfillment:

It is love that creates laws, rules nations, builds cities and leads the Republic to her highest destinies and perfects the virtues of the virtuous. Therefore, we, the prelates, knights and nobility of the Polish crown by this document do unite our homes and future generations with the knighthood and nobility of Lithuania.

And if, to these sentiments we add the motto of the Polish legions of the French Revolutionary army, who entered Italy to proclaim the rights of man, and which we find repeated in President Wilson's speech to the Senate, "all free men are brothers," we will then understand that the social and political forces of attraction which have marked the history of Poland will be the laurel crown which she will bear on entering the ranks of free and self-governing nations.